

## Our Young People

### THREE FORGOTTEN DOCTRINES

Matt. 5: 34-36; Jas. 5: 12; II Cor. 10: 4; Matt. 5: 32.

Topic for June 4.

The belief of many—I think I may say most—Christians is based more largely upon the teaching of the pulpit than the reading of the Word. It has never been the policy of the pulpit to come into very open conflict with institutions of the state and thus it has come to pass that some of the teachings of scripture have been allowed to rest untouched and by many wholly forgotten. The lesson this week takes up three,—swearing, war and divorce. These will be discussed in their order.

#### I. SWEARING

The use of oaths was common in early days when people yet half-savage did not regard very highly the necessity of keeping one's word sacred. Just as a covenant with its visible sign strengthened a promise, just as a sacrifice or other symbol strengthened a truth so the taking of an oath was a help to the people to realize the sacredness of their word. Israel was therefore permitted to swear, Deut. 6: 13, but not falsely, Lev. 19: 12, nor by anything but the true God, Josh. 23: Jer. 5: 7.

Under the new covenant however the standard was raised in this as in other things and we are taught that our simple yea or nay should be sufficient for Christians whose covenant with God also binds them to be true to themselves and to one another. Matt. 5: 34-36; Matt. 23: 16-22; Jas. 5: 12. Christians are taught however to obey the laws of the state, Rom. 13: 1-8, and these sometimes require oaths but with the provision that those who wish may say instead, "I affirm."

Our young people should be taught as they grow up to avoid the oath as sinful because of its implication that Christ in the heart is not sufficient to make one's simple word stand.

#### II. WAR

War is the fruit of the animal nature of men. There was a time when men fought like beasts and almost as much as beasts. But man, the noblest work of God, would be a failure if God were not able to make of him something better than the beasts. Savage methods of warfare are passing away. The flag of truce, Red Cross societies and other agencies of mercy are doing away with much of the needless horror of war and courts of arbitration are doing away more and more with war itself. It looks as if a Supreme Court of the nations to settle all international difficulties is almost within our vision. More and more the necessity for corporal punishment is passing away and the power of love is used instead of physical force. War is to nations what corporal punishment is to the school or home or the police force to the civil administration. The thought of war for mere conquest, plunder or revenge is to be dismissed as too barbarous to contemplate. Yet at a time when the wicked nations of the earth could not understand God nor be taught by his mercy war was permitted as a means of judgment. See Lev. 26: 25; I Chron. 5: 22; Gen. 15: 17; Eccl. 3: 8. The use of force by the government as a means of discipline is justified in the New Testament. Rom. 13: 4.

The kingdom of heaven grows not by force and its principles are opposed to war. Matt. 26: 51, 52; II Cor. 10: 4; Jas. 4: 1, 2. The day of peace is coming, Isa. 2: 4; Mic. 4: 3, 4; Eccl. 9: 18.

#### III. DIVORCE

The marriage institution was ordained by God himself and hedged about with laws to make it sacred and perpetual. It has been fearfully abused in times past and in some places today where woman has been regarded as a mere piece of property, and one of the direst omens of evil in our own country today is the increasing number of divorces. Degeneracy of the race inevitably follows immorality and God has punished those nations which have taken away the sacredness of marriage by destroying them from the earth. Yet just as oaths and war were permitted in

an age which could not attain to better things so divorce was permitted by Moses' laws but "from the beginning it was not so." Matt. 19: 3-12. Christ puts the matter again as ordained in the natural order of things and refuses to recognize divorce except for a single cause. Matt. 5: 32; Mark 10: 2-12. Husbands are taught to love their wives as their own bodies. Eph. 5: 25-33.

#### QUESTIONS

1. Why should the scriptures denounce swearing?
2. How can we obey the law requiring oaths of witnesses and yet obey the scriptures forbidding oaths?
3. What did Jesus mean by "sending a sword to earth?" Matt. 10: 34.
4. Is it right to do a thing which the scriptures forbid even tho the law allows it?
5. How can war be prevented?
6. Why should our divorce laws be more strict?
7. What can we do to enforce the three forgotten doctrines taught in this lesson?

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### HOW TO GET YOUNG MEN INTO THE CHURCH

Z. T. LIVENGOOD

"The easiest class in the community to reach is the young men and the boys by any minister who has common sense, a warm heart, and the love of Christ and of souls burning in his bones." This is a complete paragraph quoted verbatim from an article in the EVANGELIST by Theodore L. Cuyler. If this statement is true at all times and places, then I am lacking one or more of the qualifications enumerated in the above by the eminent Doctor. I think I have *common sense*, the first qualification given by him. I try to have a *warm heart*, but as God estimates hearts mine may be cold, yes, cold as liquid air. I thought I had *love for Christ* and for *souls* burning in my bones too; but this may be only vain imagination. I have been at least partially successful in winning young women and girls to Christ. I think I did it by the common sense teaching of the gospel and by manifesting a warm heart for Christ and souls. But my efforts in reaching young men have not been very successful, putting it even in the strongest terms. I would like to do better in that line. I am *anxious* to do better. I want to be taught how. I am willing to learn. I have gone to the best authors upon the subject. I have been with Jesus, and yet I have not succeeded as I would like to and as I feel I ought. I feel as tho the minister's power must be in his ability to teach God's word, his willingness to obey God's commands, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in his heart. Brethren can you help me? Do not keep silent, but write your experiences and opinions.

#### A Deeper Question

The Rev. Daniel J. Morrison, East Meredith, N. Y., gives the following sensible advice to young people. We heartily commend these words to the young people of the Brethren church:

Our Christian young people nowadays are asking the question as to whether it is legitimate for them to engage in the popular amusements, such as dancing, card-playing and the like. The question is irrelevant.

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient," says the Apostle. The question of expediency is much more to the point than that of lawfulness. But he continues: "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Ah! this is the question that you should ask, young friend: "Am I in danger of being brought under the power of amusements?" And, verily, no one can answer this interrogation for you so well as yourself. Religion is life, a high grade, the highest grade of life. It is the life of God in the soul. The one business of your being is to nourish and foster that life principle. I know of no authority on soul-culture that prescribes amusements of any kind as particularly helpful in this direction. I remember once, during a season of revival in a country village, one of the leading young ladies of the place was much concerned about her soul's salvation. She seemed to be engaged in a terrific struggle. Her spiritual guide could not see why she could not get peace, when all at once she turned to him with the query: "Mr. J., is it right to dance?" His answer contains more wisdom than all the books and tracts I ever read on the subject of amusements. Here it is: "Miss G., you are occupied in the battle for eternal life, and why are you thinking about dancing? Do you imagine that would help you?" This young woman was under the power of dancing, and it required an heroic effort to rid herself of it. Let me relate another instance that came within my experience. A young male member of my church was regular in his attendance upon dancing parties, and I was a little suspicious that he was getting too much absorbed in the art. I approached him one day, and asked him to become a member of Christian Endeavor. He answered: "I understand that your society prohibits dancing, and I would not miss a dance for all the world." In his answer he revealed the fact that he had a serious malady of spirit. He loved dancing. And in doing so he was quite in the same condition as the young man to whom Christ said: "Sell all that thou hast;" and he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

We should carefully avoid anything that would hinder our spiritual growth, and anything whatever it may be that tends to divide the heart—to make "a heart and a heart," is inimical to our eternal good. A great many people take consolation from the fact that they do not go to the theater nor patronize the social dance, while they may engage in things that are just as hurtful to their souls.

In my opinion the gods of this Christian civilization of ours in this United States are manifold more than those of heathendom, ancient and modern. There is an old saying to the effect that you can tie a man down with a hair if only you adjust it properly. There are many who are tied down by less absorbing things than even amusements. Some of these are smoking, gossip, coffee-drinking and the like.

As a general principle, it should be remembered that the one factor, and the only